



The Quarterly

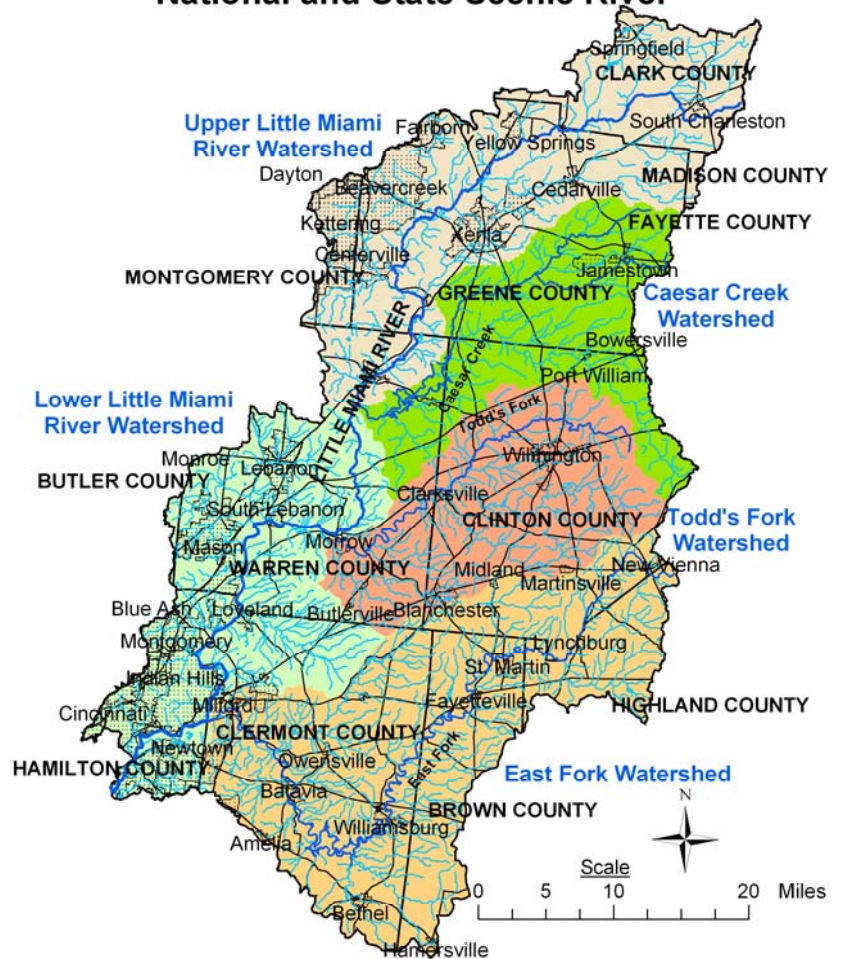
The Little Miami River Partnership Newsletter

Volume 8 Number 1
March, 2006

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The Little Miami River Watershed National and State Scenic River





The Watershed Warble

A report on the activities of the Little Miami River Partnership

ODNR and SWCD Issues

In the first part of 2006, LMRP worked closely with six local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) to resolve a state-match issue with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR). This issue dealt with contributions the Soil and Water Conservation Districts made to LMRP to carry out locally-led watershed-based planning and whether those funds could be matched by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. This financial, political and emotional hot topic was decided by the ODNR Division of Soil and Water Conservation Commission on January 18th – and the funds were found to not be matchable. Although our efforts failed to help the SWCD's obtain match, LMRP showed its ability to assist the SWCD's and ODNR on highly contentious issues. LMRP has since acted as a liaison between the ODNR and the disgruntled SWCD's to build better understanding of the results and outfall of that decision.

Todd's Fork WAP

On March 7th, LMRP submitted the completed Todd's Fork Watershed Action Plan to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources for final State approval. This final submittal was in response to a few changes requested by the OEPA and ODNR to some of the technical content of the plan. With this submittal, LMRP has fulfilled its 2001-2006 ODNR Watershed Coordinator Grant requirements and provided a plan that can be used for implementation of work that will improve the quality of the water in the Todd's Fork Watershed. It also provides a better opportunity for receiving funds from several implementation grants from the State of Ohio.

LMRP 4th Annual Water Quality Symposium

In late Summer LMRP will be hosting the 4th Annual Water Quality Symposium. This technically-oriented, one-day Symposium will focus on Riparian Corridors and their impact on water quality and environmental sustainability in the Little Miami River watershed. Development of the program is in process -- so stay tuned to our website for more details!

Lower Little Miami River WAP

The Lower Little Miami River Watershed Action Plan is in the process of being written by LMRP staff. Currently, data acquisition and analysis has taken place; and in the past few months the first two sections, the Introduction and Watershed Inventory have been written, as well as analysis of OEPA biological and chemical data. The Plan is on schedule to be ready for submittal to the ODNR for State approval in August of this year.

Implementation Grants

LMRP has been working for the last three months on assisting local entities with applying for implementation grants from the State of Ohio. Up to \$3,500,000.00 is available for stream restoration projects from OEPA's 319 Grants and up to \$15,000,000.00 is available via the Water Resource Restoration Sponsor Program funding program. In addition, the Clean Ohio Fund will be re-evaluated for additional funding and public referendum this next year. If that measure were to pass again, it would bring tens of millions of dollars to Ohio for environmental programs. LMRP is also exploring, with other partners, bringing a Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program to the watershed. This USDA-SWCD program could bring in tens of millions of dollars for implementation directed solely at the Little Miami River watershed. LMRP is also working with local groups to develop "projects in waiting" where potential projects would be assessed around the year to be ready for applying for implementation grants.

LMRP Annual Report

The 2005 Little Miami River Partnerships Annual Report is now available on-line at www.littlemiamiriver.org. This Report details the biggest planning, implementation, and educational successes of LMRP in 2005.



The Watershed Warble, continued

A report on the activities of the Little Miami River Partnership

LLMR/TF TMDL

The Lower Little Miami and Todd's Fork watersheds Total Maximum Daily Load Document (TMDL) is planned to start in 2007. This intensive biological and chemical sampling, data analysis and modeling, and impact assessment document will be undertaken by the Ohio EPA. This 3-4 year effort will identify impact sources and could affect point-source dischargers NPDES permits. In February, LMRP started the process of talks with the OEPA to be the local entity to host and facilitate the public information and input meetings. This well received idea is based upon LMRP's ability to successfully hold public meetings, work on contentious issues, bring in businesses, governments, and the public to meetings and facilitate consensus. It would also provide the area a local entity that will be able represent local issues to the OEPA staff conducting the program. At the end of the TMDL process, the entire 1,800 square mile Little Miami River Watershed will have a TMDL in place.

New ODNR Watershed Coordinator Grant

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources has recently released a new Watershed Coordinator Grant. This grant, similar to the one LMRP currently has, would provide part of the funds for a watershed coordinator position for the next three years. During that period of time, the grant recipient would have to provide matching funds up to \$75,000.00, complete any needed watershed action plans for a watershed, update existing watershed action plans, and implement the watershed action plans and projects. LMRP will apply for this grant and up to \$105,000.00 of funding for the next three years.

Fund-Raising Training

The governing Board of the Little Miami River Partnership has started the process of receiving training on fund-raising techniques. This training and future fundraising will set the stage for the future of the Little Miami River Partnership.

LMRP Officer Elections

At the January Board Meeting, LMRP elected its new 2006 Officers. Stephanie Hines was elected President, Anne Lyon was elected Vice-President, Bruce Smith was elected Secretary, and Ron Volkerding was elected Treasurer. For information, short bios, and contact information about our Board Members, please see the "About Us" section at the LMRP website: www.littlemiamiriver.org.

LMRP Quarterly Meeting

On March 22nd, LMRP hosted its first Quarterly Meeting of the year. The topic of this meeting was the great work by Rick Shamblen of Malcolm Pirnie on the Water Resource Restoration Sponsor Program for Green County Sanitary Engineering. The process has resulted in over seven million dollars of projects being awarded in Greene County. His excellent presentation is on the LMRP website: www.littlemiamiriver.org.



The Lower Little Miami River Watershed

Saturday Stream Snapshot (SSS) Citizen Monitoring Program - Come join the fun!

Volunteers needed collect samples, transport samples to the lab, analyze samples, and enter data into a database. 2006 SSS are: 3/11, 4/8, 5/13, 6/10, 7/8, 8/12, 9/9, 10/13 and 11/11. Every Saturday at 9:30 a.m., we train new volunteers and give tours of the lab.

Macroinvertebrate Monitoring Trainings will be offered 6/10 and 9/9 at 2:00 p.m. Citizen Habitat Quality Evaluation Trainings (CQHEI) will be held 4/8 and 8/12 at 3 p.m. For more information, contact Anne Lyon at (513) 891-4227 or alyon@greenacres.org.



The Upper Little Miami River and Caesar's Creek Watershed

Press Release

Greene County sponsors watershed improvements

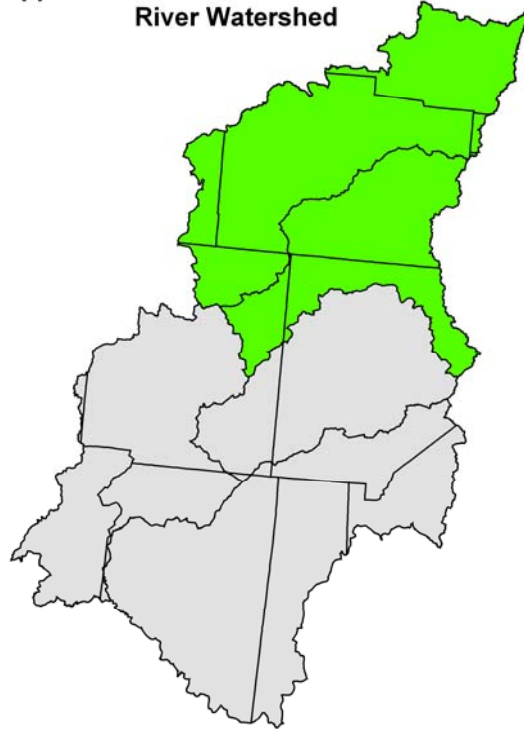
When Greene County constructs planned improvements to the Sugarcreek Water Resource Reclamation Facility, it will benefit several Greene County streams as well as users of the wastewater plant. As part of the improvements to the Sugarcreek plant, Greene County is participating in the Water Resource Restoration Sponsor Program (WRRSP). Under this program, if the County borrows money from the Water Pollution Control Loan Fund, they can sponsor watershed improvement projects within the region.

Greene County submitted nine possible projects for funding. Three were approved in full and two additional projects are eligible for partial funding. The state has set aside \$15 million per year for the sponsorship program; for 2007, Greene County will receive \$7.2 million of those funds, and may receive another \$1.2 million.

The program works through the interest paid on loans the County takes out to pay for facility improvements. For example, if the County borrows \$40 million to pay for the wastewater plant improvements, they will pay back the loan plus interest over a 20-year period. Normally, the interest would return to the state revolving loan fund. But under the sponsorship program, some of that interest is used to fund watershed improvements in the state. The state uses a competitive process to choose which projects to fund and the partners must meet grant requirements. Greene County simply serves as a sponsor. In addition, by having a project chosen as part of the sponsorship program, Greene County's interest rate will drop a tenth of a percentage point when the loan is approved. The loan rate is currently 3.25 percent, so the County would pay 3.15 percent interest. The actual amount will be determined by the interest rate at the time of the loan approval.

The three projects that were approved for sponsorships all involve purchasing land or obtaining preservation easements to preserve or restore stream areas. Two were submitted by Little Miami, Inc., for land

Upper Little Miami and Caesar's Creek River Watershed



purchase and other activities along the Little Miami River, while the other one was submitted by the Greene County Sanitary Engineering Department for stream restoration on the north fork of Massie's Creek. All of these projects involve removing exotic plants and working with landowners to plant trees and native plants along the stream banks in addition to other measures that are intended to improve water quality in the watershed.

The two projects eligible for partial funding include stream restoration along the Little Beaver Creek submitted by the Greene County Park District; and acquisition of land along the Beaver Creek by the Beaver Creek Wetlands Association.

"This is a win-win program for everyone," said County Sanitary Engineer Jeff Hissong. There is no cost to the County to participate, so there is no added cost to the ratepayers, but the program "keeps the money in the community."

The County is still working with a consultant on final plans for improvements to the Sugarcreek Water Resource Reclamation Facility in order to determine the actual cost of construction. Current estimates are in the \$40 to \$50 million range. *(continued next page)*

The Upper Little Miami River and Caesar's Creek Watershed, *continued*

(continued from previous page) To help fund the construction, the County has requested support from the Dayton Development Coalition for federal funds. Because the plant improvements involve Greene, Montgomery and Warren Counties, they requested \$10 million in assistance. The Dayton Development Coalition put the request at the top of their list of priorities. "It's no guarantee we'll get funding, but we are leaving no stone unturned," Hissong said.

Little Miami River Watershed Festival

The LMRP and partners are working together on developing the 3rd Annual Watershed Festival. This educational and fun-oriented festival is aimed at children and adults from throughout Southwest Ohio. It will be held on October 21st at the Caesar's Creek Park Museum and Headquarters. Last year's event was on a beautiful, sunny Fall day and over 25 presenters and over 200 people came for a fun-filled day of water-related learning. This year, the festival will even be bigger and better! Stay tuned to our website for more details!

Greene County Well-Head Protection Program

The Greene County Department of Sanitary Engineering has started the process of developing a new plan to protect one of its major well-head areas for ground water protection. LMRP and many other organizations are providing assistance and funding is coming from a planning 319 Grant that Greene County received for this purpose. This will be a one year project.

The Todd's Fork Watershed

Todd's Fork
Watershed



Home Sewer Treatment Systems Program

The Warren County Health Department is in the last stages of developing the county-wide Home-Sewer-Treatment-System(HSTS) Plan. LMRP is providing assistance and when this plan is completed it will open new funding opportunities for Warren County to address HSTS problems.

Clinton County Open Lands, Inc. - April Events

Spring Wildflower Walk - Sat., April 8, 2 p.m. See the emerging wildflowers on a 70 acre farm that will soon be the County's 4th park. Meet at 302 Lorish Avenue, Wilmington, at 1:00 p.m. to carpool or meet on site at the roadside (farm field road frontage) just to the west of 873 Webertown Road.

COMMISSIONER CANDIDATES FORUM on environmental and land preservation issues facing Clinton County. Tuesday, April 11, 6:30 p.m., Wilmington Municipal Community Room. Refreshments will be served. The candidates are: Karen Haley, Jim Knowles, Cindy Peterson and David Stewart for the Republicans and Terri Thobaben for the Democrats.

Candidates will be answering some prepared questions presented by CCOL, Inc., Streamkeepers and Clinton Rails-to-Trails, and then the public can ask questions as well as speak to individual candidates during refreshment time. It is important for people concerned about environmental and land preservation (agricultural and natural) to come to the forum to hear what the four Republican and one Democratic Candidate for Commissioner have to say about these issues.

NOTE: CCCRD is hosting the candidates on Monday evening, April 10, to talk about Bypass related issues. Contact CCCRD if you want to learn more about that candidates forum.

Earth Day and Earth Day Dinner - Sat., April 22 - Events all day at Southern State Community College and around Clinton County. UPDATED flyer attached. Dinner at 6:30 p.m. in the Wilmington Municipal Community Room, catered by Sam's Meats. \$15 for adults, \$7.50 for kids 6-12, 5&U free. Silent Auction and speaker. RESERVATIONS OR TICKETS must be purchased by April 15! Purchase tickets from Laura Curliss, Christine Hodgson, Lori Williams, or Carolyn Matthews or call 382-7701 and leave a message.

Congratulations to Clinton County Open Lands, Inc!

The CCOL has purchased its first property — a 2.4 acre woodlands in the Highland area of Wilmington.

The East Fork Watershed

2006 Annual River Sweep

Mark your calendars now! Volunteers are needed for the 14th annual East Fork River Sweep. This yearly event will be held on Saturday, April 29th. Clean up efforts will focus on selected segments of the East Fork Little Miami River that will be determined within the next month. Like years past, we will also “sweep” shoreline areas at East Fork Lake and Stonelick Lake.

Volunteers can either walk the riverbanks or use a (free) canoe to collect litter. Gloves and trash bags are provided. Free T-shirts (while supplies last) will be given to all volunteers and a picnic lunch will be provided at the conclusion of the clean-up.

Got a group? We encourage you to organize a group at work, at church, or in your club or civic organization for the River Sweep. Your “Team” can have fun while helping to protect the river.

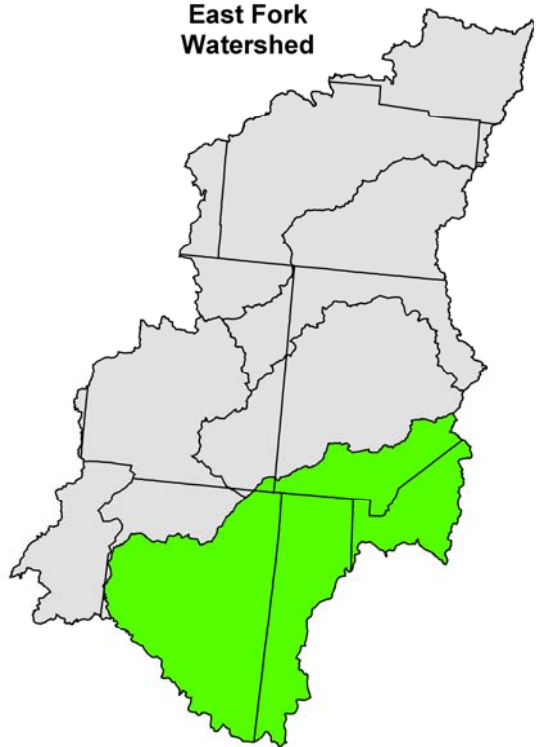
If you would like to participate in the East Fork River Sweep, contact East Fork State Park at (513) 734-4323 after Mar. 1st to register or to get information on meeting locations and times. Information will also be available on the East Fork Watershed website at: <http://www.clermontswcd.org>.

NOTE: Children under 18 must have a waiver signed by their parents to participate.

New Watershed Coordinator For East Fork

Jason Brown, of Seaman in Adams County, has joined the Clermont Soil & Water Conservation District staff as the new Coordinator for the East Fork Little Miami River Watershed. Jason has a B.A. in Natural Sciences/History from Shawnee State University and is finishing up his M.S. at Ohio University in Environmental Geography. As part of his M.S., he is researching mussel populations in nearby Ohio Brush Creek to find links between their reproductive success and the quality of water and habitat in the stream.

**East Fork
Watershed**



Jason most recently worked with the Nature Conservancy Edge of Appalachia Preserve in Adams County. He also has past experience as Senior Naturalist and Outdoor Program Coordinator for YMCA Camp Kern, and helped manage a local canoe and kayak excursion operation.

Jay Dorsey, watershed coordinator for the past 3 years, left the District this month to join the staff of ODNR Division of Soil & Water Conservation in a newly created position of Water Resources Engineer. Jay will continue to work with Clermont and other SWCDs around the state, assisting with stormwater, and stream restoration issues.



The East Fork Watershed, continued

Lower East Fork Riparian Corridor Protection Project

In fall 2004, East Fork Watershed Collaborative partners submitted an application and received preliminary approval for \$2,000,000 through Ohio EPA's Water Resource Restoration Sponsor Program (WRRSP) to protect riparian areas in the Lower East Fork watershed. This grant is expected to protect over 240 acres of land along the East Fork River, addressing one major objective of the Lower East Fork Watershed Management Plan.

The Clermont County Commissioners, Office of Environmental Quality, Clermont County Park District and the East Fork Watershed Collaborative are all partners in this project. The group has just completed their final project plan for OPEA approval and this spring will begin working with riparian landowners along the Lower East Fork River, from Stonelick Creek to the confluence with the Little Miami River in Milford. Project funds will be used to purchase conservation easements or parcels outright to establish protective buffer zones along each side of the river wherever possible. For more information about the project contact Chris Clingman at 732-2977 or Jason Brown at 732-7075.

East Fork TMDL

Work is continuing on a TMDL plan for the East Fork watershed. This is the first community-led TMDL project started in Ohio. Clermont County is taking the lead on the project which is being funded by a grant from the U.S. EPA. The project just completed the stressor identification phase and is now calibrating the models which will be used to study the impact of pollutant loadings for those stressors in the watershed. For further information contact Paul Braasch, Clermont County Office of Environmental Quality at 513-732-7745.

Upcoming Events

Family Fishing at Greenacres

Greenacres and the Cincinnati Chapter of the Izaak Walton League will host a Family Fishing Program at Greenacres Pond 7/15 from 1-3 p.m. For more information, contact Anne Lyon at (513) 891-4227 or alyon@green-acres.org. Advance registration required.

2006 Splash “Connections” Teacher Training Workshops

Looking for fun, creative, hands-on science activities that are already correlated to Ohio’s Academic Content Standards? Greenacres Foundation, Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District, and the University of Cincinnati Center for Economic Education are offering 4 day-long workshops:

8/7: Water, Weather, Wildlife, and Food Chains (Grades 3-5)

8/9: Diversity, Weather, Earth Systems, and Change (Grades 6-8)

8/9: Monitoring Streams, Ponds, Lakes, and Wetlands (Grades 3-12)

8/10: Human Impacts, Data Interpretation, Maps, and Technology (Grades 9-12)

All workshops will be held at Greenacres Old Church from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Each one-day workshop costs \$35 and includes resource materials, activity supplies, and snacks. Reduced price UC Graduate Credit is available. Contact Anne Lyon at (513) 891-4227 or alyon@green-acres.org for more information.

2006 Little Miami River Challenge

Little Miami Scenic River Challenge Cleanups will be held Saturdays this summer. For details contact, Izaak Walton League (513) 683-7233 or www.cinci.iwla.org.

Ohio River Sweep

2004 River Sweep is Saturday 6/18 from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. For more information about the Sweep, call the Ohio River Sweep Hotline: 1-800-359-3977

2006 Environmental Resources Day at the Cincinnati Zoo

Environmental Resources Day to be held 8/24 at the Cincinnati Zoo from 3 p.m. – 6 p.m. For more information, contact Anne Lyon at 891-4227 or alyon@green-acres.org.

Great Outdoor Weekend 2006

The 3rd annual Great Outdoor Weekend will be held 9/23 and 24. Greenacres will be coordinating activities at the Izaak Walton League Lodge Saturday 9/24 from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. For more information, contact Anne Lyon at 891-4227 or alyon@green-acres.org.